

The College of Law Victoria helps Maria Lovison give back to indigenous Australia

The College of Law Victoria 2008 bursary recipient and Nyul Nyul woman, Maria Lovison, is already using her legal and community service skills to help indigenous Australians

June 27, 2008: Maria Lovison's heritage is everything to her and she will eventually use her legal and community service skills to benefit indigenous Australians and the women of the Beagle Bay Aboriginal community.

Ms Lovison said The College of Law Victoria's support for her practical legal training will enable her to work as a solicitor and she will eventually transfer those skills to benefit her local Aboriginal community and indigenous welfare nationwide.

"It was challenging returning to university to study law after being out of the education system however I found the environment at Charles Darwin University to be very supportive and friendly," she said.

"My colleagues at law firm Cannon, Coburn and Associates, where I commenced an Articles of Clerkship placement, had immeasurable patience and The College of Law Victoria provides me with a great deal of flexibility in addition to financial support."

Ms Lovison said The College of Law Victoria's bursary assistance, which covers tuition costs for practical legal training, has allowed her to meet other financial commitments for her HECS fees and mortgage and has given her the flexibility to continue with a second degree - a Bachelor of Applied Science in Aboriginal Community Management at Curtin University, Western Australia.

Her second degree will help her build stronger relationships with Aboriginal communities throughout Australia and will complement her work for the Commonwealth's welfare agency, Centrelink.

“I will be able to advise Aboriginal communities about the effect of welfare reform, their legal rights and obligations with Centrelink and provide the Commonwealth agency with feedback about service gaps,” she said.

“I will also be able to apply my legal skills to educate Aboriginal communities about the justice system and - better still – keep them from entering the system in the first place.”

Ms Lovison said her approach was to increase awareness within Aboriginal communities about issues that affect them, to increase education levels and to help Aboriginal communities create their own solutions to the problems they face.

“I’m enjoying being able to help indigenous communities help themselves. It’s very empowering, uplifting,” she said.

Ms Lovison described herself as living in two worlds. She said in one world she was embarking on a career in law in Darwin and working for the Commonwealth government through Centrelink, while in the other she was going back to her community and observing the challenges being confronted by indigenous Australians.

“I will eventually return to my local Beagle Bay Aboriginal community to work with them, especially the women of Beagle Bay,” she said.

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The College of Law Victoria is a joint venture between The College of Law and the Law Institute of Victoria and offers Practical Legal Training and the Trainee Admission Program as paths to admission in Victoria. The College is committed to being at the forefront of training technology, offering online programs and catering to distance education. More information can be found at www.collaw.edu.au

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